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May is National Hepatitis Awareness Month, and May 19 is World Hepatitis Day. These annual observances raise awareness about the global impact of viral hepatitis and the importance of preventing hepatitis-related liver disease. Hepatitis is a general term that means inflammation of the liver. Viruses are the most common cause of hepatitis. In the United States, the most common forms of viral hepatitis are hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. Hepatitis B and hepatitis C are particularly dangerous because they can be chronic diseases, leading to cirrhosis, liver failure, or liver cancer. All three forms of viral hepatitis can cause similar symptoms — jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), fever, fatigue, upset stomach — soon after infection. For more information on hepatitis, visit www.cdc.gov.

Navy and Marine Corps Medical News

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Navy at the Forefront of Medical Research

By Chief Mass Communication Specialist (AW) Paul DeLaughter, National Naval Medical Center Public Affairs

BETHESDA, Md. - Navy doctors are at the tip of the spear in regards to medical research. However, senior officials are concerned that a decline in volunteerism may hamper their efforts to combat Malaria and other infectious diseases.

Forty percent of the Earth's population lives in Malaria endemic areas, and 2 to 3 people a minute die from the disease — most often children under the age of two, said Judith Epstein, a clinical investigator for the Navy Medical Research Center.

She said researchers from the Navy Medical Research Center's Clinical Trials Center, located on the National Naval Medical Center's campus, are currently working on a vaccine to eliminate the threat of malaria.

"A vaccine is the key ... this would change the world," Epstein said. "For the military, it would mean that our people could be deployed and we wouldn't have to rely on medicines to prevent malaria."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define malaria as a mosquito-borne disease. People who contract malaria often experi-

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PACIFIC OCEAN - Lt. Cmdr. Walter Steigleman examines the eyes of a Guatemalan patient during Continuing Promise (CP) 2008 aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) May 10. Boxer is deployed supporting the Pacific phase of CP, an equal partnership mission between the United States, Guatemala, El Salvador and Peru. *U.S. Army photo by Specialist Brian R. Williams*

USNH Yokosuka Passes Dual Inspections With Flying Colors

By Jill Ward, U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan - U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka achieved the ultimate seal of approval from both civilian and military entities when it passed dual inspections and accreditation during The Joint Commission and the Medical Inspector General (MEDINSGEN) visit April 22-25.

The Joint Commission and MEDINSGEN teams also visited Branch Health Clinics (BHC) as far away as Diego Garcia and as close as Negishi.

The Joint Commission's accreditation signifies that a hospital meets high national performance standards. The purpose of accreditation is to assist hospitals in improving their performance, raise the level of patient care and demonstrate accountability in the rapidly changing health care marketplace. Even though USNH Yokosuka is an overseas military treatment facility (MTF), it must demonstrate to the civilian surveying team that it meets the same 2000 national standards as the 15,000 U.S. facilities that it accredits.

When Navy MTFs are evaluated by The Joint Commission, the MEDINSGEN coordinates the timing of their visit. They assess the effectiveness and efficiency of Navy MTFs in support of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery's (BUMED) mission. The MEDINSGEN approaches the review from a military medicine perspective,

evaluating more than 60 programs. They also help facilitate the process with The Joint Commission to help bridge the terminology gap that can occur between civilian and military standards.

During their visits, both groups met with a variety of people including patients, staff, providers and leadership. In addition to meeting with focus groups and subject matter experts, the surveyors conducted tracers that followed patients through the care process. During the tracer, staff is required to explain all of the policies and procedures that are used specific to that case.

"This is an excellent chance for someone from outside of our organization to come in and take a look at the level of patient and family-centered care we provide. We were thrilled to hear about all of the good work that is being done here at the core facility and at our branch clinics. Our patients can have full confidence that they receive the same healthcare here that they would in CONUS" said USNH Yokosuka Commanding Officer Capt. Michael J. Krentz.

Many programs received special mention from the surveyors. Two of these programs include the support that USNH Yokosuka provides its shipmates: the command sponsorship program for new arrivals and its ongoing sup-

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Preventive Medicine Team Improves Guatemala Public Health

By Mass Communication Specialist
2nd Class Joshua Jarvis, USS Boxer
(LHD 4) Public Affairs

PUERTO DE SAN JOSE, Guatemala - Medical professionals, embarked aboard USS Boxer (LHD 4), shared their public health and sanitation expertise with partner-nation citizens from Puerto de San Jose, May 15, as part of Continuing Promise (CP) 2008.

CP is a humanitarian civic assistance mission aimed at fostering friendly, mutual cooperation and understanding between partnering nations by providing medical assistance and the opportunity to share ideas that will improve the future of healthcare throughout the world.

CP's Preventive Medicine Directorate team held training alongside Guatemala's Lead Inspector from the Ministry of Public Health, Fredy Antonio Rodriguez-Ruano. The classes were held in the Puerto de San Jose municipal building and aimed at informing local food vendors the proper ways to store and

prepare food. The team combined the use of visual aids and humor in their presentation to make it more effective.

"Our partner-nation counterpart decides what we do that day," said Cmdr. Ilin Chuang, a doctor and the preventive medicine director for CP. "Today he requested that we train food vendors."

The team's work also included testing local water sources for contamination and parasites. They identified that some samples were infested with mosquito larvae which would cause malaria.

"Most people don't realize you can contract malaria just by ingesting larvae in the drinking water," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Ronald Bennett.

A key element of the CP deployment is the potential for a variety of medical staffs to collectively address regional medical concerns and develop effective, economical solutions that can be used through the region. The Preventive Medicine team and Rodriguez worked

together sharing information that will help the future health of Guatemalan citizens in the area.

"It has been a great collaboration," added Rodriguez. "I have learned so much."

Boxer's mission exemplifies the U.S. maritime strategy which emphasizes deploying forces to build confidence and trust among nations through collective maritime security efforts that focus on common threats and mutual interests.

Embarked units and organizations aboard Boxer for CP include Amphibious Squadron 5, Fleet Surgical Team 5, U.S. Public Health Service, Project Hope, Project Handclasp, Navy Seabee Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 303, Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 14, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 764, Tactical Air Control Squadron 11, Special Marine Air Ground Task Force 24, Helicopter Sea Combat Support Squadron 23, Assault Craft Unit 1, Fleet Survey Team and Beach Master Unit 1.

Medical, Dental Assistance Provided During Exercise Cobra Gold 2008

By Cpl. Eric D. Arndt and Lance Cpl. Brian Marion, III Marine Expeditionary Force (EMF)

KORAT, Thailand — For three months, Chid Pokkatok has had a problem.

"Whenever I ate, there was a sharp pain," Pokkatok said, gesturing to his upper cheek.

Unfortunately, many people in Thailand share similar situations. According to the World Health Organization's Jan. 2002 Thailand Health System Profile, there was only one physician per 3,341 people. Qualified healthcare workers such as doctors, dentists and nurses are in short supply to perform standard medical procedures.

To help the country's strained healthcare system and ease the burden of so many patients, military medical personnel from the Kingdom of Thailand, the U.S., Japan and Singapore held a medical and dental civic assistance project

at the Ban Thang school here.

The project is the first of 10 similar missions scheduled to occur in the Kingdom of Thailand during Exercise Cobra Gold 2008, a regularly-scheduled joint/combined exercise focused on maintaining and improving military to military relationships among the exercise's participating countries.

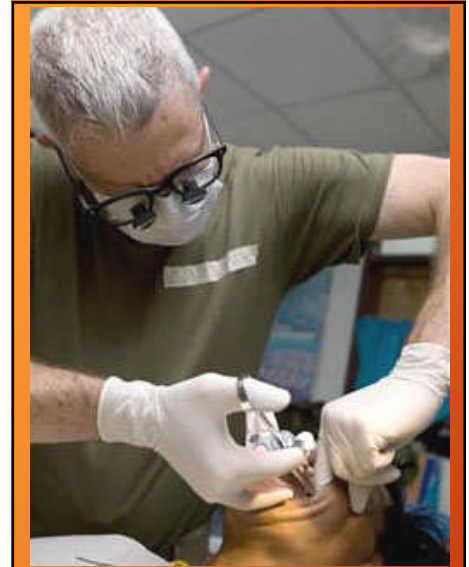
The idea is simple – bring lots of medical supplies, set up shop in an open area, and assist as many people as possible in the time allotted.

"Everyone is welcome to come," said Cmdr. Christopher Pearce, the officer in charge of the exercise's medical missions. "As long as our doors are open, we will see anybody."

"There are plenty of people to help, and we are anticipating over 1,000 people," Pearce added.

The patients began arriving

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KORAT, Thailand – Cmdr. Barry Duncan, a dentist with 4th Dental Battalion, Dowd Air Force Base, Marietta, Ga., prepares to pull Chid Pokkatoka's tooth during a medical and dental civil assistance project at the Ban Thang School. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Eric D. Arndt

Medical research continued...

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ence fever, chills, and flu-like illness. If left untreated, the disease is often fatal.

Epstein said malaria is an illness that has plagued the military for decades. She referenced a 2003 peace keeping mission in Liberia in which 80 U.S. active duty service members contracted the disease. The mission had to be aborted after just 10 to 12 days on the ground, because nearly half of the expeditionary force became ill with malaria.

Cmdr. Cindy Tamminga, a clinical researcher at the Clinical Trials Center, said the drugs currently in use can effectively treat malaria, but the key is to defeat the disease before it needs to be treated, and a vaccine would do this.

"It's clear that malaria, and other diseases such as Dengue Fever, need to be researched to protect American service members

abroad and people who live in high risk areas across the globe," Epstein said. "This can't be done without volunteers."

"Because active duty service members are required to be deployable at a moment's notice to support the Global War on Terrorism, active duty volunteerism has declined significantly," Tamminga said.

Richie said the Navy has authorized the use of civilians in its research in order to widen the pool of volunteers for infectious disease case studies.

Kathryn Smith, clinical research recruiter for the Navy Medical Research Center, said she understands that the focus of military medicine is on the war but, she said, research cannot be forgotten.

She said many of the people who volunteer do so because they have been abroad and seen the devastation malaria can do.

"The people who volunteer do so because they want to help. They

want to make a difference," Smith said.

"Unfortunately, in some cases these people are not eligible because they have been to endemic areas."

Dr. Jose Mendoza, director of the Clinical Trials Center, said the Navy has more than 35 years of malaria research under its belt. This, he said, puts the Navy at the tip of the spear in experience and knowledge regarding the disease.

"Malaria is usually associated with poverty but if we can eradicate it we could improve the quality of life for millions of people," said Mendoza, a native Venezuelan who also contracted malaria as a young man.

"If we could develop a successful malaria vaccine it will have an impact on the world similar to the Polio vaccine," Epstein said. "People have the opportunity to be part of something that will have a huge impact worldwide."

Afghan Hospital Holds First Mass Casualty Exercise

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Robert Wollenberg, Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan — More than 300 Afghan National Army (ANA) medical personnel participated in a mass casualty exercise April 24 at the National Military Hospital compound in Kabul, Afghanistan.

This exercise was the first of its kind to be conducted at the facility and marks the beginning of a new era in mass casualty medical treatment practices for Afghan army medics, nurses and physicians.

"The Afghans have had decades of experience with trauma and war, but have not had the opportunity to develop a preparedness plan that can be practiced, exercised and repeated," said Cmdr. Mary Nadolny, one of 20 Navy Medical Embedded Training Team members working with the ANA here. "The medical ETT brought the ANA medical staff new ideas to incorporate into a plan that will work for them."

The scenario for the exercise was a bus of ANA soldiers hit by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, which resulted in 30 injured soldiers and civilians.

Once the volunteer "casualties" donned their artificial wounds, and with cards describing their symptoms pinned to their clothing, they headed to the emergency room area to be triaged and treated accordingly.

As the medical staff triaged the victims, based on their injuries, other medical support staff moved the injured on gurneys or led them to one of several areas for treatment. The medical staff moved the most critical patients to the ER to be stabilized before moving them to either the intensive care unit or surgery. The staff moved the victims with less serious wounds to the wards, while others were evaluated and released.

"The importance of this exercise that the people of Afghanistan know a lot of stuff, but don't have any practice," said Mujibullih Waseem, Afghan medical physician



KABUL, Afghanistan - Lt. Cmdr. Bradford Volk, a Family Practitioner with the Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A), observes treatment of a patient during a mass casualty exercise at the National Military Hospital (NMH) Kabul, Afghanistan. Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Robert Wollenberg

and interpreter to the METT. "The mentors work very hard, and their ideas for Afghanistan doctors and ANA hospitals are very useful."

The exercise tested triage, various medical treatments, functions of a medical emergency operations center, CPR and focused abdominal sonography testing.

"The goal of these drills is to see where we have deficiencies, see what we do well, see what should be changed so everyone does better," Nadolny said. "The drill did exactly what it was supposed to do, and by far was a success. It gave us many objectives, many things to work on in the future, and that's why we're here."

Chief of Navy Chaplains Visits USS Chosin

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Michael A. Lantron, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

PEARL HARBOR - Rear Adm. Robert Burt, Chief of Navy Chaplains, visited the Pearl Harbor-based USS

Chosin (CG 65) May 7 while in the region for the Chaplain Corps' Professional Development Training Confer-

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USNH Yokosuka continued...

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port and sponsorship program for Individual Augmentees (IA).

In addition, BHC Atsugi was commended for its excellent work in the pharmacy for its labeling system that distinguishes between similar looking and sounding drugs and distribution of high risk medications.

Medical Inspector General Capt. Patricia A. Goodin led the team from BUMED. "You can tell that the people here embrace a patient-centered philosophy and want to do the right thing," she said. "The patient is in the center of the picture."

Krentz is proud of all that is being accomplished at USNH Yokosuka. "I hear it all of the time around base that our staff does a great job and embraces a patient-centered philosophy. It is reassuring to hear it from outside surveyors as well. It takes teamwork from the deckplates up. I'm proud of our professional, dedicated staff, most especially our hospital corpsmen," Krentz said.

The staff and leadership at USNH Yokosuka were also applauded for good work in other areas including fleet liaison, obstetrics, limited duty processing, occupational health, immunizations, safety, and individual medical readiness.

NSHS Portsmouth Sponsored Recruit Division Graduates

By Larry Coffey, Navy Medicine Support Command Public Affairs

GREAT LAKES, IL. - The first recruit division sponsored by the Naval School of Health Sciences (NSHS) at Portsmouth, Va., graduated May 2.

Twenty-seven of the 57 new Sailors from the NSHS-sponsored Recruit Division 174 are headed for training as hospital corpsmen, according to Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/AW/FMF) Tony Ellison, NSHS senior enlisted leader for academics.

"Seeing all these future corpsmen with so many questions in their eyes about their futures was truly humbling," Ellison said. "It reminded me just how much I didn't know about what the Navy had

in store for me when I was a recruit, and why it was so important for us at NSHS to sponsor and act as mentors to these budding corpsmen at the beginning of their naval careers."

The NSHS sponsorship began when Ellison travelled to Great Lakes and presented the NSHS command flag to Recruit Division 174 during a March 21 ceremony. Recruit Training Command (RTC) Great Lakes designed the division to be made up predominantly of future hospital corpsmen because of the NSHS sponsorship.

"We tried to give the recruits as much support and information as possible about their future as hospital corpsmen," said Cmdr. Shari Kennedy, NSHS public affairs offi-

cer. "We held a job fair-type luncheon with them during their training. We sent T-shirts with our logo on them so that they could run their PFA (Physical Fitness Assessment) in the T-shirts. We attended their PFA to encourage them and then attended the graduation one week later. On the day of graduation, we gave them our command coin."

Graduation day featured Capt. Susan Herron, NSHS commanding officer, as the reviewing officer for the ceremony.

"The enthusiasm of the students and the professionalism of the staff were awesome," Herron said. "It was phenomenal and one of the most pivotal events in my Navy career."

Recruit Division 174 Sailors said

Cobra Gold continued...

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early in the morning and waited for the project members to develop their temporary medical charts and diagnose their ailments.

After being transferred to one of several specialized care areas, the patients received medical treatment in a multitude of ways, including eye and dental examinations and prescribed pharmaceuticals when necessary.

According to Pokkatok, everyone looked forward to

the project and all it entailed.

"I was not anxious, as I had a tooth pulled before, and I am very happy," Pokkatok said, after his troublesome pain had been relieved. "I am happy because I wanted to see the people from all the countries, and they came to help everybody."

At the end of the day, more than 600 people were seen for everything from a cobra bite to acid reflux disease, welcoming the help as graciously as anyone with a three-month toothache can.

Chaplains continued...

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ence taking place on board Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

While aboard the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser, Burt

spoke with Sailors, ate lunch with the crew and was given a tour of the ship's spaces.

"It was great to be on the Chosin, the crew was very hospitable and I enjoyed meeting and greeting the Sailors," said Burt.

Lt. Corey Thornton, Chosin's command chaplain, thought that Burt's visit improved the morale of the crew.

"It's a great opportunity to have the head of the Chaplain Corps take a look at the ship and I think the crew was really encouraged by it," said Thornton. "When he spent time with the crew, you could tell they were thrilled that someone like him

was proud of them."

As he departed the ship, Burt commented on the superb time he had visiting the Chosin crew.

"They are a top-notch professional crew," said Burt.

Burt became the 24th Chief of Navy Chaplains on June 23, 2006.

Navy Chaplains serve on ships and at foreign and domestic bases throughout various Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard commands. The corps responsibilities include conducting worship services, overseeing religious education programs, and providing spiritual guidance and care to hospitalized personnel and/or their family mem-



Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
2300 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20372-5300

Public Affairs Office
Phone: 202-762-3221
Fax: 202-762-1705